



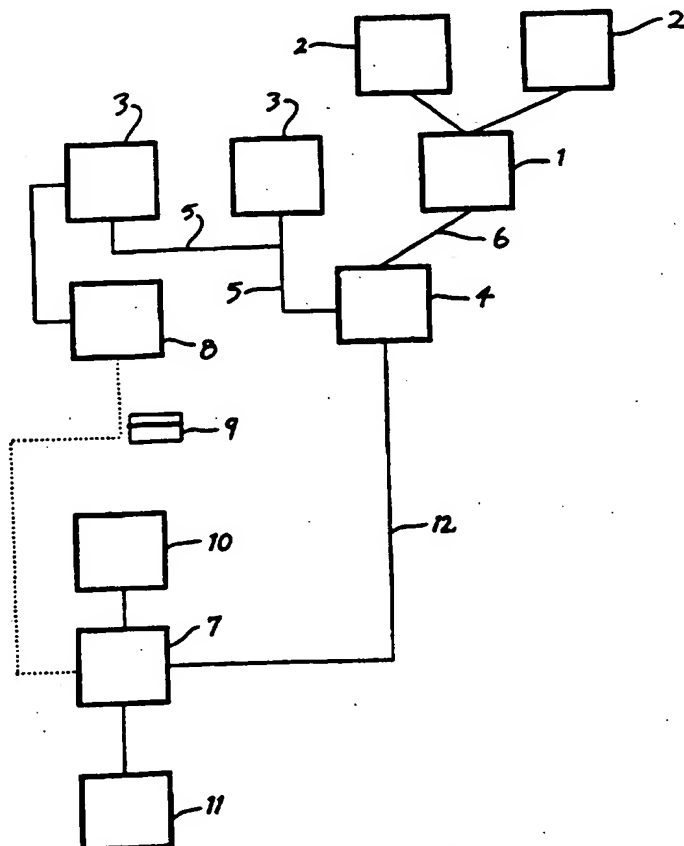
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

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(54) Title: MERCHANDISING APPARATUS

(57) Abstract

Within a store are cash registers (3) which are adapted to transmit to a central computer (4) data signals (5) indicative of the volumes of sales. A proportion of each sale amount is calculated and added to the total in a jackpot prize accumulator (1) by means of a jackpot price increment signal (6). Potential buyers entering a participating store and made aware of the current value of the jackpot prize and that they have a chance of winning the jackpot prize by purchasing goods. Tokens adapted for use in one or more gaming machines (7) are used to provide the buyer with a chance of winning the jackpot prize.



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TITLE: MERCHANDISING APPARATUS

TECHNICAL FIELD

This invention relates to apparatus for use in merchandising and for promoting the sale of goods and services.

5 BACKGROUND ART

Sales promotion schemes are well-known in which purchasers are awarded points, coupons or the like with each purchase and become entitled to a prize after a predetermined number of coupons have been accumulated. So called "Thrift" coupons and "Frequent Flyer" schemes exemplify this kind of promotion. In general, each
10 coupon corresponds to a small discount on the purchase price of goods purchased. Such systems are advantageous for the vendor, since customers are thereby encouraged to return to the same store over a long period of time to gain sufficient coupons for a prize and customer loyalty is encouraged. However, customers readily assess the value of prizes and the amount of expenditure required to attain a prize and
15 so such schemes tend to be perceived as a reward for fidelity and do not motivate purchasers either to advance a future purchase or to buy on impulse.

It is also well-known to promote the sale of individual goods by having the purchaser return a label which acts as a lottery ticket giving the purchaser a very small

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chance of winning a very valuable prize, for example the purchaser of a jar of coffee might have a very small chance of winning an automobile. This form of promotion has proven to be effective but suffers from the disadvantage that there is a long delay between the date of purchase and the date upon which the outcome of the lottery is
5 known, which reduces its effectiveness as a motivating force in a consumer society increasingly oriented towards instant gratification. Moreover, such promotions are usually product specific, involve long lead times through the distribution chain and, once in place, are inflexible.

It has also been practiced to give away a scratch lotto card to persons who
10 purchase goods above a predetermined value. By this method the purchaser gains a predetermined probability of winning a prize which may correspond to a very large discount or which may greatly exceed the value of goods purchased. Although the probability of winning a major prize may be low, the possibility of winning a very valuable prize by making a small purchase has proven to be more successful than are
15 coupon schemes in motivating buyers to buy immediately. That is to say, some people are more highly motivated by a small probability of winning a large prize than by a high probability (or certainty) of winning a lesser prize.

A disadvantage of utilising scratch lotto systems for sales promotion is that it involves risks for the promoter. For example all the major prizes may be won early in
20 the promotion in which case shoppers are not motivated and in an extreme case the shopkeeper may not cover the cost of the promotion.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to provide a novel method of, and means for, sales promotion which overcomes or at least ameliorates the above discussed
25 disadvantages of prior art.

According to a first aspect the invention consists in apparatus comprising:-

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a register for recording data indicative of sales of goods and/or services to buyers;

means for displaying a prize value indicative of a prize available to be won by a buyer;

5 means for increasing the prize value in response to the number or value of selected sales recorded at said register; and

means for providing a buyer with at least one finite chance of winning the prize.

According to a second aspect the present invention consists in apparatus for
10 motivating potential buyers to purchase goods and/or services, said apparatus comprising:-

a plurality of registers for issuing respective first signals indicative of sales of goods and/or services to buyers;

means for displaying a prize value indicative of a prize available to be won by
15 a buyer;

means responsive to the first signal for selectively increasing the prize value;
and

means for providing a buyer with at least one finite chance of winning the prize.

20 According to a third aspect of the invention there is provided a method of sales promotion including the steps of:

recording on a register data indicative of sales of goods and/or services to buyers;

displaying a prize value indicative of a prize available to be won by a buyer;

25 increasing the prize value in response to the number or value of selected sales recorded of said register; and

providing a buyer with at least one finite chance for winning the prize.

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According to another aspect of the invention there is provided a method for motivating potential buyers to purchase goods and/or services, said method including the steps of:

- providing a plurality of registers for issuing respective first signals indicative
- 5 of sales of goods and/or services to buyers;
- displaying a prize value indicative of a prize available to be won by a buyer;
- selectively increasing the prize value in response to said first signals;
- providing a buyer with at least one finite chance of winning the prize.

Preferably, the prize value is increased in proportion to the number or value of

10 selected sales. In alternative embodiments, however, the proportion is varied either on a time or random basis.

In preferred embodiments of the invention the prize value increments for every sale recorded but the proportion of the increment may optionally vary from one product sold to another or may be limited to occur only for selected goods and/or

15 services. Also in preferred embodiments, the number of opportunities accorded to a buyer to win the prize increases with the value of goods and/or services purchased.

In highly preferred embodiments of the invention the registers are cash registers and may be located in one or more locations within a store and in one or more participating stores. The prize value may be indicated in a display associated

20 with each cash register and/or may be displayed at one or more other locations in the store or participating stores. The prize value may increase as a fixed proportion of the sales recorded at the various registers or may be incremented by a greater increment for predetermined products the sale of which it is desired to promote more heavily.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, buyers are provided with a finite

25 chance for winning the prize by being given one or more tokens or encoded cards at the cash register where a sale to them is recorded, and which gives them one or more opportunities to "play" an electronic gaming machine or other "game machine", which

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provides a finite but random or pseudo random chance for becoming a "winner" of the prize. However, other means for determining prize winners among buyers may be employed.

The number of opportunities to "play" accorded to buyers is generally
5 determined by the amount spent and the opportunities may be required to be exercised within a predetermined time.

Preferred embodiments of the invention differ from game machine systems in which players at each of a number of game machines cause a prize to increment by a predetermined constant amount each time one of the machines is played. In contrast,
10 in the present invention, the prize value increments by a variable amount which depends upon the value of goods and/or services purchased and which in some cases may vary depending upon which goods and/or services are purchased or may vary from one store to another. A second difference is that with linked gaming machines, the action of actuating one machine simultaneously results in both a player having the
15 opportunity to win a prize and, if the player loses, the prize being incremented. In preferred embodiments of the present invention, the prize is incremented immediately a buyer makes a purchase but the buyer's opportunity to win the prize may occur separately and subsequently.

A further difference is that in preferred embodiments the present invention
20 provides for a prize to be decremented if a credit is issued at one of the participating cash registers.

It will be appreciated that the term "prize" can be used to mean, without limitation, a cash reward, discount or other inducement.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

25 The invention will now be more particularly described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

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Figure 1 is a schematic representation of an apparatus according to the invention; and

Figure 2 is a schematic representation of an alternative embodiment of the apparatus of Figure 1.

5 MODES FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

In the embodiment of the invention shown in Figure 1, a prize accumulator 1 stores a number indicative of a prize. The prize accumulation register is associated with one or more displays 2, which may for example be large alphanumeric display inside and/or outside one or more stores which shows the current value of the prize or
10 a close approximation to it, for example a number of dollars rounded off to the nearest hundred or nearest thousand.

Within the store, or participating stores, are cash registers 3 which are adapted to transmit to a central computer 4 data signals 5 indicative of the volume of sales transacted at the respective registers. A proportion of each sale amount is calculated
15 and added to the total in the prize accumulator by means of a prize increment signal 6. Alternatively this calculation can be performed by circuitry associated with each register, a prize increment signal being transmitted from each register to accumulator 1.

Potential buyers entering a participating store may be made aware of the
20 current value of the prize by virtue of the display and are informed by appropriate means that purchasing goods and/or services will increase the prize and will give them an opportunity to win it. In a simple form of the invention, a buyer of goods in the store will be given one or more tokens (depending upon the amount spent by that buyer), the tokens being adapted for use in one or more machines 7 accessible either in
25 the store or at another address. The machines 7 may, on actuation, display a randomly or pseudo randomly selected combination of symbols of which certain combinations are "prize-winning". Alternatively machines 7 may be of the kind which selects a

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number "n" at random within a predetermined numerical range (e.g. 6 digits) and stores it in a memory but does not display the selected number, and then counts successive "plays" declaring the nth player as the winner. Whatever means is used to provide a finite chance of the prize to be won by a buyer, a "prize-winner" is thereby
5 identified and becomes entitled to the prize displayed at the instant of winning. The prize accumulator is then reset (and if required a new random number is selected) and a new prize commences to accumulate.

Other means may be employed by which the prize may be won. For example a scratch-card may be issued which is required to be scratched at the sales register at the
10 time of purchase and which in a predetermined proportion of cases declares a winner. Another method would involve players pressing a button at the cash register, or even the registration of a sale itself at the register could be used to count purchasers and to declare an "nth" purchaser as a winner. However, use of suitably adapted electronic game machines such as those used in some fun parlours are preferred means for
15 selecting "winners".

A preferred method of determining whether a purchaser wins the prize is to provide at or adjacent the register a touch-sensitive video screen which selectively displays an image of a scratch-card or the like. That is, the purchaser can move their finger across the screen surface to electronically scratch the image and reveal a symbol
20 combination which may allow them to win the prize. The image is then updated to allow the next purchaser to perform a similar operation.

In a highly preferred embodiment of the invention each cash register is electronically connected with a read/write device 8 by means of which data may be read from or written to a magnetic stripe card 9. In one mode the device writes data to
25 a paper card bearing a magnetic stripe, the data being indicative of the number of "plays" to which the buyer has become entitled by virtue of a purchase. Each "play"

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provides an opportunity to win the prize. The card may also be encoded with the date and/or time of the purchase and if desired with other data.

In a second mode the read/write device reads data from an account customer card or the like (for example a magnetic stripe plastic card) which identifies the customer and which writes to the card data representing an entitlement to a number of "plays", depending upon the value of goods purchased. Either type of card may be inserted in a suitably adapted game machine with provision to read the cards and to allow the cardholder a number of "plays" in accordance with the data recorded on the cards.

10 A further alternative involves issuing the purchaser with a coded card, whereby that code is subsequently entered in one of machines 7 to allow actuation of that machine. The code can be entered by swiping the card across an appropriate reading device. Alternatively, the purchaser can enter the code via a keypad.

If a player using machine 7 "wins", the machine may be provided with means 15 10 for displaying information to that effect, and/or means 11 for printing out information to that effect, and/or means 12 for crediting an account of a customer electronically with the amount corresponding to a prize won or a combination of the foregoing. The customer account data may be held in computer 4 or a different computer.

20 If desired, certain buyers may be required to use accumulated "play" entitlements within a predetermined period. Thus, for example, buyers issued with a first mode type card may be required to use their "play" entitlements on the same day as they were accumulated, while account customers for example, may have pre-agreed rights to accumulate points over a period of months or years.

25 If desired the opportunity to win the prize may be confined to pre-identified account customers. In that case, cash registers need only have a reading device such as an Eftpos terminal. A central computer may then be used to store data indicative of

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entitlement to plays acquired by each account holder, and to deduct "plays" utilised. The machine 7 may also have a read only device which identifies the purchaser and permits that account holder to play the game a number of times determined in accordance with the entitlement balance held by the central computer. The machine 7
5 is adapted to send a signal to the central computer indicative of each play and reducing the remaining entitlement of that account holder to further "plays" in accordance with "plays" used.

In a preferred embodiment of the means for providing a finite chance for winning there is provided apparatus which may be actuated for example by a lever or
10 button or by insertion of a token or of a data card or by other means and which has a display screen. Upon actuation the apparatus' screen displays at random a combination of symbols. These symbols may for example be symbols such as "anchors", "cherries" or the like. However, in preferred embodiments the symbols displayed may be changeable remotely under control of a computer program and may
15 represent trade marks or brand names or may illustrate goods available in the store, for example white goods, soft drinks or the like. These symbols may represent goods which are to be won or to be promoted. That is, the invention can be used to provide a chance of winning both the accumulating prize and one or more fixed prizes.

Likewise, if desired, the nature of the game played on various game machines
20 on a network may be changed under remote control of a computer program.

Any suitable means may be used for networking the cash registers with the prize accumulator. Any desired number of machines 7 may be connected to the network. The machines 7 can be modified to include any one or more of the above discussed features and are considered to be further aspects of the present invention.

25 If desired, encoded cards may contain additional information e.g. identifying a store or cash register. Certain buyers about whom demographic information is known may be provided with club membership cards which identify them as participants and

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which may give them special privileges in a manner similar to account holders. For example club members or account holders may be entitled to more "play" opportunities than non-members to win the prize for each purchase that they make, or their opportunity to win the prize may be not time restricted. This enables statistical data to be obtained and recorded showing a demographic breakdown of sales, and the purchasing preferences of identified customers may be studied.

The invention may also be utilised with purchases made remotely e.g. via home computers, modems, Infonet or via cable TV systems and the like within the scope of the invention herein described. In that case the purchasers' terminal may act as both the register and the machine 7.

The number of opportunities to "play" (i.e. to win a prize) may vary from one class of customer to another and from one class of goods to another or from one time to another. The number of plays awarded may be calculated directly at the point of sale by the cash register terminal or the value (or type) of sales may be recorded and transmitted to a remote computer the number of "plays" to be awarded being calculated at the machine 7 at time of "play". The machines 7 need not be located at the same site as the cash registers. For example, the machines may be located in a casino. Preferred embodiments of the system provide for the prize to either decrease when credits or returns are recorded at a participating cash register, or to not increase until a corresponding volume of sales has occurred. If desired, the system may provide for both major and minor prizes of different value.

If desired the system may provide for the prize to be paid to a "winner" in kind rather than in cash.

The number of opportunities to "play" awarded to buyers at the point of sale may be based on a formula taking account of various factors such as the mix of purchases, the total sales accumulated at various cash registers and other factors.

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Another embodiment of the invention is illustrated in Figure 2 where a local network 21 is used in a single location, at for example, a retail outlet. The network 21, along with a plurality of like networks 22 and 23 located at other respective retail outlets, communicates with a central computer 24 for allowing a single prize to be effectively simultaneously used at all the outlets. Accordingly, the prize can be larger and/or grow faster due to the larger number of sales from which the prize is generated.

Network 21 includes a site controller in the form of a personal computer 26. Computer 26 communicates with the registers or other point of sales devices 27 to extract data indicative of the volume and timing of sales, along with data indicative of number of opportunities to win the prize that have been allocated to a buyer.

For example, the receipt given to the buyer may include a code such as a string of characters or a bar code which can be subsequently used to generate credits on one of the terminals 28 provided. For a large purchase the code may allow the generation of a number of credits and, accordingly, increase the number of finite chances the buyer obtains to win the prize.

Terminals 28 also communicate with computer 26 for validating the code entered by the buyer and to provide computer 26 with data indicative of whether or not the purchaser with that code, after using the terminals, is entitled to the prize and/or any other fixed prize.

Network 21 also includes a redemption terminal 29 where a winning receipt can be processed. Again, terminal 29 communicates with computer 26 to validate the code on the receipt and to confirm whether the holder is entitled to a prize and if so, to award the prize.

Computer 26 also communicates with a video controller 30 which in turn drives both a display 31 and a plurality of video screens 32. Display 31 is prominently mounted to allow both buyers and prospective buyers to view the size of the available prize. If required more than one display is used.

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Screens 32 are used to actively promote the prize as well as advertise other goods and/or services provided at the outlet.

Although the use of only three interlinked networks 21, 22 and 23 has been described, it is possible to link a greater number. For example, a retail chain can link
5 all its separate stores throughout a particular region, state or country.

Preferably, terminals 28 in addition to providing a site for the purchaser to determine whether they have won the prize, provide advertisements about products and/or services available from the outlet. Moreover, once the purchaser enters the code they have been allocated the advertising can be chosen in response to the goods
10 that were purchased. For example, the advertising can reinforce the advantages of the purchase or, alternatively, canvass the relative merits of competing products.

Such advertising can also be used to inform the purchaser of other outlets where such products and/or services can be obtained within a greater chance of winning the prize. This is used to promote sales from a particular outlet.

15 As will be apparent to those skilled in the art from the teaching hereof, the invention may be embodied in other forms and features of one embodiment may be combined with those of another within the scope of the concept disclosed.

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CLAIMS:-

1. An apparatus comprising:
a register for recording data indicative of sales of goods and/or services to
buyers;
5 means for displaying a prize value indicative of a prize available to be won by
a buyer;
means for increasing the prize value in response to the number or value of
selected sales recorded at said register; and
means for providing a buyer with at least one finite chance of winning the
10 prize.
2. An apparatus for motivating potential buyers to purchase goods or services,
said apparatus comprising:
a plurality of registers for issuing respective first signals indicative of sales of
goods and/or services to buyers;
15 means for displaying a prize value indicative of a prize available to be won by
a buyer;
means responsive to the first signal for selectively increasing the prize value;
and
means for providing a buyer with at least one finite chance of winning the
20 prize.
3. An apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the prize value is increased in
proportion to the number or value of selected sales.
4. An apparatus according to claim 3 wherein the proportion is varied either on a
time or random basis.
- 25 5. An apparatus according to any one of claims 2 to 4 wherein the prize
increments for every sale recorded but the proportion of the increment varies for one
product sold to another.

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6. An apparatus according to any one of claims 2 to 5 wherein the number of chances provided to a buyer to win the prize increases with the value of goods and/or services purchased by that buyer.
7. An apparatus according to any one of claims 2 to 6 wherein the registers are
5 cash registers located in one or more locations within a store or in one or more participating stores.
8. An apparatus according to any one of claims 2 to 7 wherein the prize value is indicated by a display associated with the or each cash register and/or at one or more other locations in the store or participating stores.
- 10 9. An apparatus according to any one of claims 2 to 8 wherein the buyer is provided with the at least one finite chance of winning the prize by being given one or more tokens or encoded cards at the cash register where a sale is recorded.
10. An apparatus according to claim 9 wherein the token or encoded card gives the buyer one or more opportunities to play a machine which provides a finite but random
15 or pseudo random chance of winning the prize.
11. An apparatus according to claim 9 or claim 10 wherein said encoded card is the receipt for the goods and/or services purchased by the buyer.
12. An apparatus according to claim 11 wherein the receipt includes a bar code.
13. An apparatus according to claim 10 including a site controller for receiving
20 said first signal which also includes data indicative of the code associated with said card and the number of chances the buyer has obtained to win the prize, wherein upon entry of the code into the machine by the buyer, the site controller verifies the code and provides the appropriate number of game credits to the buyer.
14. An apparatus according to claim 2 including means for providing a buyer with
25 at least one finite chance of winning a second prize.
15. An apparatus according to claim 14 wherein said second prize is of a fixed value.

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16. A method of sales promotion including the steps of:
recording on a register data indicative of sales of goods and/or services to
buyers;
displaying a prize value indicative of a prize available to be won by a buyer;
5 increasing the prize value in response to the number or value of selected sales
recorded at said register; and
providing a buyer with at least one finite chance of winning the prize.
17. A method for motivating potential buyers to purchase goods and/or services.
including the steps of:
10 providing a plurality of registers for issuing respective first signals indicative
of sales of goods and/or services to buyers;
displaying a prize value indicative of a prize available to be won by a buyer;
selectively increasing the prize value in response to said first signal; and
providing a buyer with at least one finite chance of winning the prize.
- 15 18. A method according to claim 17 wherein said prize value is increased in
proportion to the number or value of selected sales.
19. A method according to claim 17 or claim 18 wherein the number of chances
provided to a buyer to win the prize increases with the value of the goods and/or
services purchased by that buyer.
- 20 20. A method according to any one of claims 17 to 19 wherein said registers are
cash registers located within one or more stores and the buyer is provided with the at
least one finite chance of winning the prize by being given one or more tokens or
encoded cards at the cash register where a sale is recorded.
21. A method according to claim 20 wherein the token or encoded card gives the
25 buyer one or more opportunities to play an electronic gaming machine which provides
a finite but random or pseudo random chance of winning the prize.

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22. A method according to claim 21 wherein the encoded card is the receipt for the goods and/or services purchased by the buyer, said method including the further steps of:

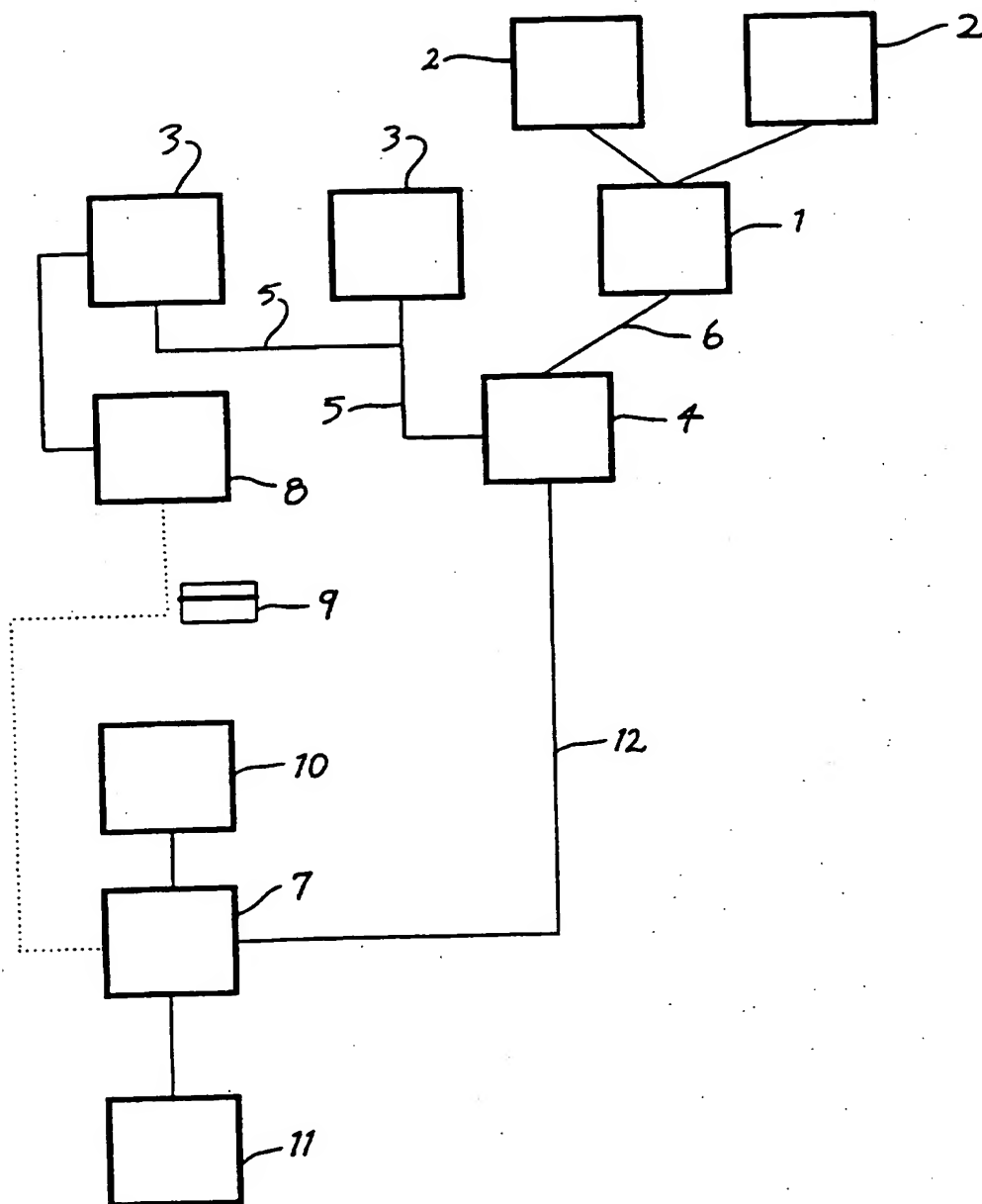
obtaining data from said registers indicative of the code associated with said
5 card and the numbers of chances the buyer has obtained to win the prize;
verifying the code entered into the gaming machine by the buyer; and
providing the appropriate number of game credits to the buyer.

23. A method according to claim 17 including the further step of providing a buyer with at least one finite chance of winning a second prize.

10 24. A method according to claim 23 wherein said second prize is of a fixed value.

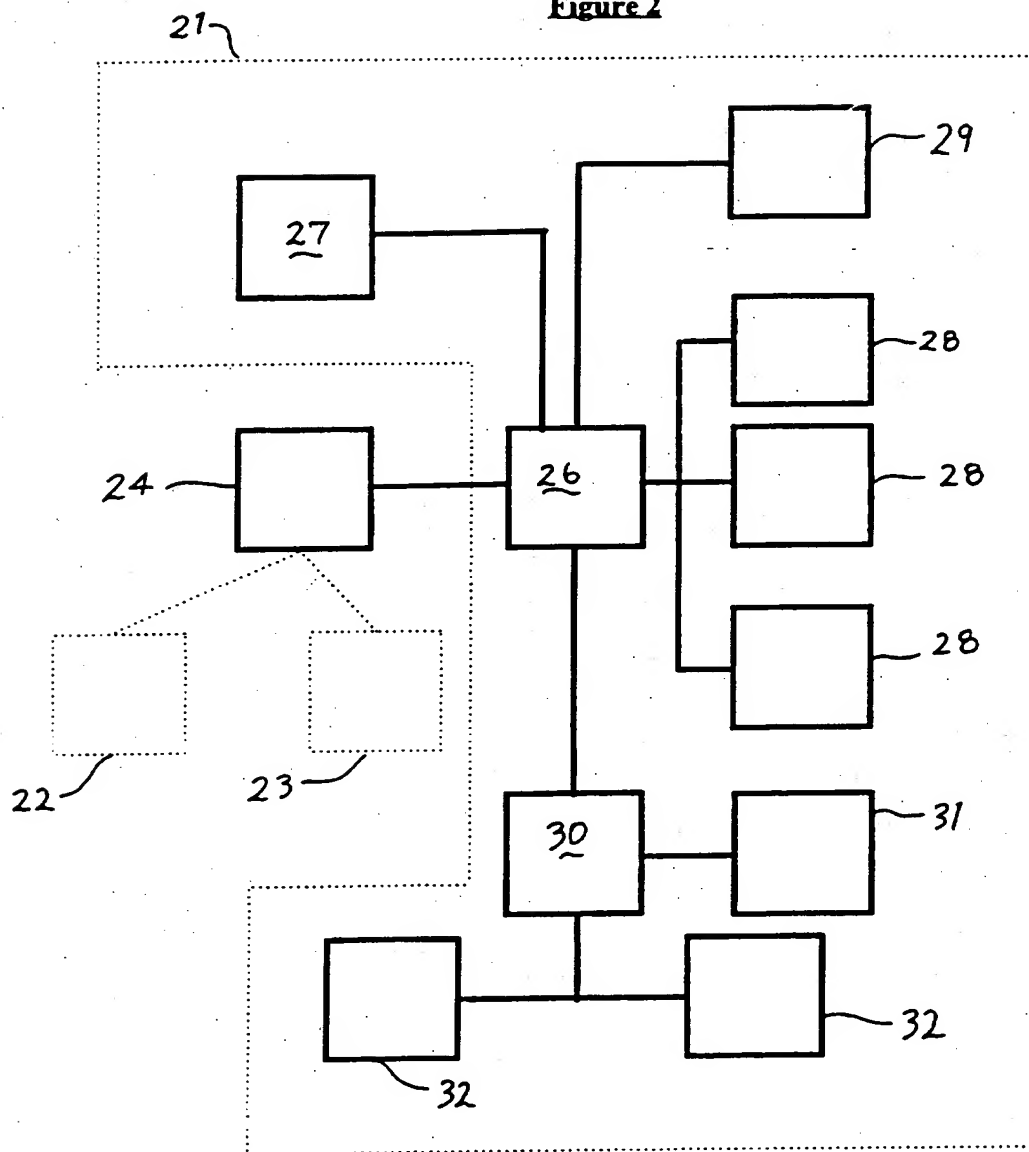
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Figure 1



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Figure 2



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.
PCT/AU 95/00819

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER		
Int Cl ⁶ : G07G 1/14, 1/12, G07C 15/00		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC.		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED		
Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC : G07G 1/14, 1/12, 1/01, 1/00, G07C 15/00		
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched AU : IPC as above		
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) DERWENT and JAPIO: SALE, PRIZE or REWARD, WIN or GAIN or CHANCE		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 3852576 A (RUDD) 3 December 1974 col 2 line 51 - col 3 line 47, col 4 lines 15-35	1-4,6-9,11,12,14-20, 23,24
P,A	US 5401946 A (WEINBLATT) 28 March 1995 col 13 lines 42 - col 14 line 68	
P,A	AU 79181/94 (658357) B (RAYNER) 6 April 1995	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex		
* Special categories of cited documents: "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art "&" document member of the same patent family		
Date of the actual completion of the international search 8 March 1996		Date of mailing of the international search report 14 MARCH 1996
Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY ORGANISATION PO BOX 200 WODEN ACT 2606 AUSTRALIA Facsimile No.: (06) 285 3929		Authorized officer M.E. DIXON Telephone No.: (06) 283 2194

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

National Application No.

PCT/AU 95/00819

C (Continuation)**DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
P,A	EP 0653735 A1 (MARKIDEA S.R.L.) 17 May 1995	
A	DE 4009980 A1 (BUCHELE) 2 October 1991	
P,A	Patent Abstracts of Japan, JP 07-121773 A (MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC CORP) 12 May 1995	
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